BULGARIA AND BALKAN SECURITY

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Bulgaria and Balkan Security

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ABSTRACT

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The subject matter of this paper – Balkan security – is one of the most argued ones at the end of 20th century. It is so not only because the geopolitical position of the Balkan peninsula presumes that the development there have a rather significant impact on the whole of Europe – something historically proven – but more so because the world's attitudes and reactions to the problems there reflect a thoroughly new approach of the international community to such complicated and sensitive issues as nation states' sovereignty, human rights violations etc., and because it shows a completely new awareness that the contradictions between internal freedom of action of domestic regimes and their obligations to comply with internationally recognized norms and rules on one side and the limited, and inefficient, diplomatic means of the international community to influence the behavior of such regimes on the other, may require taking a decision diametrically opposite to the commonly agreed Westphalian principles – a decision based on still not definitely established criteria about the right to interfere. Therefore it is extremely difficult for any individual top encompass the whole scope of the problems concerning Balkan security and their solution in a single and limited work. In this paper I have made an attempt to broadly express my personal view on the definition and main problems of the term "security", depict the existing threats to security in the Balkans, and briefly explain the Bulgarian approach to these issues.

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PREFACE

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Therefore it is extremely difficult for any individual to encompass the whole scope of the problems concerning Balkan security and their solution in a single and limited work. In my paper I have made an attempt to broadly express my personal view on the definition and main problems of the term "security", depict the existing threats to security in the Balkans, and briefly explain the Bulgarian approach to these issues.

I give credit to all the authors mentioned, in the bibliography of this work, for having a significant influence on the process of forming my personal opinion. Also I would like to express my gratitude to both faculty staff and fellow students (USA and international) for their invaluable help in developing my skills in perceiving reality through the lens of a wider strategic point of view.

BULGARIA AND BALKAN SECURITY

There is no ultimate definition of the term "security". Different authors give different, and sometimes contradictory explanations. This is especially true when the authors try to make their definitions more exact and place in them descriptions of the main sources of or/and the conditions necessary for security. If a broader and therefore less accurate, yet more enduring in its all-embracing nature, approach is accepted, then security may be defined as establishing, maintaining and adjusting a scheme of interaction and interdependence between the major players in a specific region or in the world, so that conflicts generated by their politico-economic relationships and competition could not develop into war.

For many centuries humanity lived with the presumption of the inevitability and acceptability of wars, although feeble attempts to preserve peace were occasionally made. Probably the first more serious effort to create and impose a security scheme was the Westphalia agreement. Numerous such schemes were invented thereafter. None of them made wars disappear, although each scheme was more sophisticated than the former. In many cases the signatories failed to maintain the scheme, which led to a new war. Most recently, although maintained, the schemes became outdated and no steps were undertaken to adjust them so as to match the requirements of a changed world. This is the case now after the scheme of the cold war yielded tremendous changes in the world in favor of its creators. The recent reignition of old and eruption of new conflicts show the urgent necessity of readjusting the current security scheme. Certain steps are being undertaken in this direction but the slow tempo demonstrates an unjustifiable Olympian serenity.

There are some assumptions in the proposed definition, of which the key one is the inevitability of further acceleration of the rate at which the world changes. This dynamic will make any, even the most hyper-sophisticated security scheme viable for a limited period of time only. It means that we cannot expect to solve the problem of security by maintaining a static functional scheme. As the dynamic of the processes in the world dictate, the scheme must be perpetually readjusted to meet the new emerging requirements. Any other more rigid approach would sentence even the most successful scheme to obsolescence and the faster the world changes the sooner the rules become outdated. There is no perfect scheme. The notion of abandoning the current scheme and establishing a new one is rather appalling as they are usually invented after the world experiences devastating major conflicts. Adjusting the existing scheme is safer and could comprise means and ways directed towards taking preventive rather than reactive actions, or in other words, shape versus respond. It does not condemn those parts of the scheme that have not only proved to be successful but that are obviously still viable.

A good example in this regard is the policy of deterrence and containment of the Soviet Union bloc adopted during the Cold War, which with small adjustments will still have a role to play in discouraging potential adversaries from launching full-scale wars. Another such example is the practice of selective engagement that the US has been maintaining ever since the so-called "small wars" launched in Latin America in the beginning of the century. The nature of such wars does change but the method is still used as it results in positive outcomes. Examples are provided by the interventions in Haiti, Nicaragua, etc.

Even the war in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf could be considered similar to them, as it was not a full scale but a limited one. Such wars will certainly occur in the future too. But on the other hand the method should not be automatically extrapolated to all cases that look similar on first sight. For example, although all of them are ethnic disputes, the conflicts in Rwanda, Somalia, Timor, Spain, Yugoslavia, etc. are far from being equal to each other. Approaches to their resolution must also differ. That is the core meaning of the term "adjustment" used in the proposed definition. The end of the Cold War although widely celebrated, raised a number of new challenges. Much has been said and written about it. Less has been done so far. Although many of these challenges were anticipated and thought of, the scope of the effect that they might have on the entire world situation was, in some cases, miscalculated.

There are many examples of such miscalculation, but probably the sourest one is the entire policy of the US and the international community, toward the processes of Yugoslavian disintegration. Why is it so? Not only because it affects all the countries on the peninsula, but also because the region, being in Europe, plays a destabilizing role for the whole continent, where the US has vital interests. The major miscalculations were, in the first place, the scale of the impact that developments in the Balkans might have on the international situation and, in the second place, but not by importance, the longevity of the time necessary and efforts required to soothe the ulcer. Not to mention the strain on resources caused and the fact that not only the Yugoslavian people will be required to pay the bill. The significance of the Balkans to Europe and its ability to project instability is manifest in the fact that it sparkled latent imperial ambitions, and woke up forgotten fears and mistrusts within Europe. To a certain extent it induced some tension even within the most successful and powerful alliance – NATO. All these helped "Balkanization" to become a term for referring to other similar processes in other parts of the world that geographically have nothing to do with Balkans.

Many of the recent developments in the world, and especially the Balkanization, show that the time for the establishment and adoption of some new elements of the world security scheme is of critical importance.

Security threats in the Balkan region

To fully understand the security situation in the Balkans one has to know at least the key points of the history of the region. It has been a really busy one in regard to both ethnic and religious calamities. Being part of Mediterranean with its mild climate it accommodated numbers of tribes, to start with different ancient Greek tribes, including the Thracians to the north, and ending up with the Slavs, who occupied the most northern part of the peninsula. Clashes between these tribes had small consequences so long as there was enough space for everybody there. First to establish central power over the region was the Roman Empire, whose extent reached the Black Sea and Danube. Then after its disintegration another empire – Byzantium – took its place in the region. It controlled practically unopposed most of the Balkan Peninsula. Numerous Slav tribes that populated the lands to the north of the empire did not represent a threat both due to their peaceful nature and the lack of organization and unity. Nomad tribes that roamed the unpopulated lands north of the Danube occasionally crossed the river to forage for food, harassing

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the local Slav population. They were not a match for the well organized equipped and trained Byzantine army, comparatively small units of which were enough to drive them away to the north of Danube again. The Byzantine Empire did not bother to go beyond the Danube and considered the land north of the river as wilderness. It kept control over the Slav population living on the peninsula but used it in a similar way to that of nomad tribes: primarily as a source of goods (mainly food) and never incorporated it into the borders of the empire. This relatively unchallenged dominance of the Byzantine Empire over the peninsula continued till the latter decades of the 7th century. By that time the existence of the Old Bulgarian State (to the northeast of Black Sea) was endangered, for it was situated on the crossroad of "the great migration" and could not resist the invasion of the numerous tribes passing through its territory. New tribes constantly appeared and each of them, although unable to defeat Bulgaria, painfully harassed it. This led to the decision made by the then khan of Bulgaria to abandon the old state and to seek out a more secure place where a new state could be established. That decision drove Bulgarians to the Balkan Peninsula.

Finding unoccupied territory to the north of the Balkan mountain range Bulgarians established their state on it, incorporating into that state the Slav tribes that lived unorganized there, based on their consent and on the principle on the equality of the rights of all the citizens. Moreover, this act ended up with the incorporation and peaceful assimilation of the Bulgarian tribe by the more numerous Slav population. What remained at the end was the name of the state, honoring the warriors who salvaged the local population from the perpetual harassment of the Byzantine Empire. The empire, although not having intentions to incorporate Slavs populated areas into its territory, saw the establishment of the new state as a threat to its interests. The threat was namely a cessation of their exploitation of the Slavic population, which up to that time was an easy victim for the empire's well-organized requisition troops. For the Byzantine Empire, which at that time lacked a serious enemy, the extermination of the new state became a goal number one. Subsequent wars resulted in a different outcome: an expansion of the Bulgarian state over vast territories of Slav population and forced recognition of the Bulgarian kingdom by the Byzantine Empire. These two major players in the region had no other enemies capable of imposing a significant threat on them. So they kept waging wars against one another with shifting success up to the mid 14th century when the Turks invaded the Peninsula and one by one defeated both of them.

The Ottomans established their empire beyond Danube and up to Vienna. It lasted up to the end of the 19th century. Bulgarians, like all the other nations of the peninsula, struggled against the Ottoman yoke. At the end all Balkan nations gained their independence. The end of the Ottoman Empire was marked by the reemergence of all the old regional states, with culturally, religiously and ethnically mixed populations. The newly awakened nationalism of all the states, the lack of security agreements between them, and last but not least the unjust demarcation of the borders made by the great powers resulted in a number of wars between all the Balkan states. These perpetual conflicts, also superimposed on both world wars, steadily accumulated a great deal of hatred and mistrust among all countries in the region with no exceptions. Another negative outcome of the misfortunate history of the peninsula was the

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economic devastation that it suffered. First, its development was impaired during the long period of Ottoman dominance, when the energy of the peoples was directed towards gaining independence and thus straining the resources of the Ottoman empire too and preventing its extension further to the west. Then after World War II the deal between the great powers left more than half of the Balkan states under Soviet influence which led to yet another deceleration of their development. The collapse of the communist regime in the USSR resulted in a sequence of events, which have been carefully observed but not consistently explained, let alone predicted. For if we assume that they had been predicted we must also assume that the politicians who had the power to prevent them did not do so due to either ill will or unbecoming gullibility and political shortsightedness. What happened in the Balkans must be added to the lessons learned in order to create conditions for better success in the future in assessing all aspects of such developments, including their possible outcomes and the impact they may have on international relationships, and for planning and taking appropriate actions well in advance.

Security threats and sources of instability in the Balkans

Bulgaria assesses the possibility of direct military aggression against itself as very low, and therefore does not consider any state as an adversary. Nevertheless it takes into account that in regard to the Balkan region as a whole, with the exception of the nuclear arms race, that is very unlikely to occur, nearly the whole range of known threats exist. The dynamic of the processes worldwide and consequently in the region will, and already does, alter the importance of different threats and the their impact on security and stability.

Armed conflicts between states in the region are still possible. Such conflicts are most likely to occur amongst the newly created states after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. They would be preceded by very short warning periods, would most probably have limited military and political objectives and would not involve mass mobilization. Such wars are dangerous because usually they tend to become protracted and both belligerents seek if not allies at least support from abroad. Thus the scope of the conflict may go far beyond the boundaries of the countries directly involved. However, considerable negligence and miscalculation from the whole international community is a necessary precondition for such conflicts to occur. This makes them improbable in the near future unless the developments in the world turn in a very unfavorable direction.

Other existing regional disputes such as the Greece-Turkey dispute over Aegean territorial waters and Cyprus can play a destabilizing role on Balkans in a similar or even more dangerous way, as these states are militarily powerful. Fortunately NATO's strong commitment to constraining its allies prevents further escalation of the tension and may even prompt the opponents to find a mutually satisfactory solution.

Ethnic conflicts are the most fashionable Balkan outbursts recently. Having in mind the inherited mixed ethnic structure of all the countries in the region, and given a tradition of local uprisings stretching back over several hundreds years[1], it could be asserted that under certain circumstances, such conflicts are not only possible but also imminent in many of the Balkan states. Normally (not only in the Balkans)

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ethnic unrest is internally generated. Misgovernment, failure to meet basic citizens' needs and political, religious or other kind of suppression of minorities largely contribute to exacerbating the actually never disappeared ethnic conflicts. But the picture acquires a completely different character when external powers provide open or clandestine support to ethnic movements within other countries. This scenario is far from fanciful; nationalism and irredentism are very much a part of Balkan realities.

Religious extremism is another potential destabilizing factor. Out of all the countries in the region Bulgaria appears to be the least negatively affected by any of the existing internal religious diversities and contradictions. Yet, similarly to ethnic conflicts, this can also be imported.

Organized crime can endanger national security by destabilizing state authority. Organized crime, especially international crime, is something extremely difficult to fight as it is always a step ahead of the official authority. Drug trafficking, illegal trade in firearms, financial crimes, illegal alien smuggling, trafficking in women and children, intellectual property theft, computer hacking and public corruption are all linked to international criminal activity and all have a direct (negative) impact on security and prosperity[2]. The distortion and corruption it can inflict on the society erodes the basis of the state and might even cause it to fail. Such is the case with Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is being kept from collapse by doctor "International Community".

Averting democracy is something closely related to organized crime. Corrupted and incapable governments are prone to indulge in the temptation of eluding a democratic course in favor of personal interests. A good example of such phenomenon is the establishment of the highly corrupt personalist regime of Sali Berisha that led to economic and political collapse in Albania in 1997. Such events may make it possible for the "good old commies" to persuade people that it is only they who can reverse things back to the "good old days".

Terrorism is generally viewed as a separate threat in US political and military literature. It is placed here as an acknowledgement of the authors whose works have widely been used in this research and out of the reverence paid to them. Otherwise terrorism could be viewed not as a separate threat but more as a tool used by disproportionately weak adversaries who know that any overt confrontation is doomed to be unsuccessful and who cannot even think about imposing their will over their opponents by using conventional force. This tool is more and more excessively used worldwide and the Balkans is not an island in this regard. No corroboration about terrorism is necessary; it is enough to mention that a terrorist act in Sarajevo was the spark that ignited WWI.

The creation of a security vacuum on part of the peninsula is another dangerous perspective. This threat is generated to a large extent by powers outside the region. It may happen as a result of yet another compromising deal between current major world players – Europe and US on one side and Russia on the other. Such a deal would be similar to that made after World War II and unfortunately its occurrence does not seem altogether impossible. A more rigid Russia using all its remaining leverage may incline the West to trade a territorial sphere of influence for the promise of more security. If such a deal is imposed upon Balkans "AS IS" (untied to any credible military alliances) nothing but renewed

invigoration of nationalism, separatism, religious extremism, political and military opportunism and all such sort destabilizing isms can be expected. Current European and American policy indicates strong commitment to the region and shows that there is a determination to avoid such mistake. However, the final result will depend exceptionally on the posture of the USA.

Although most of the above mentioned threats have a strong historical origin, nearly all of them to a large extent are dependent, provoked and urged to develop by the poverty that is widespread throughout the region. Having nothing left to keep, people are not only prone to crime but also, which is more dangerous, in hope for a better future, they are more ready to follow false ideas so abundantly pored over them by opportunist "politicians". It is poverty that permeates through the whole spectrum of existing threats, links them together and creates a vicious circle where none of them does occur alone but all of them function in close and deep interaction. It is a rule that once risen each of the threats provoke others and in many cases they act as resonators towards one another, the developments gain speed and might grow like an avalanche, till everything goes completely out of control. If it is wise to use this hyperbola for depicting a possible disastrous outcome in the region it is certainly wiser to promote the suggestion that we should make all the efforts and take all necessary measures to prevent the occurrence of an avalanche, rather than launching search and rescue operations afterwards. The first is better not only from a humanitarian point of view but it would be more cost effective too.

Bulgarian policy toward Balkan security takes into account the nature and origin of the existing and possible threats and, to the extent that the state's capabilities permit, is generally directed to a preventive and constructive course of action.

Bulgarian domestic policy proved to be if not the most proper one at least one of the most efficient and right amongst all post-communist countries in the Balkans. The fact that Bulgaria is the only peaceful Balkan state (to exclude Greece and Turkey) ever since the beginning of "The Big Change" is the best proof for the pertinence of domestic policy. This is also the right place to give credit to Bulgarian people and the whole of Bulgarian society and each of its members for the wisdom and social responsibility that made it possible to avoid any bloodshed. It was this same wisdom that may have come to surprise some political analysts who considered Bulgaria as one of the strongest communist citadels, therefore one of the most difficult ones to bring down.

The whole nation has undergone a series of difficult and painful changes in the process of radical reorientation from a totalitarian regime with state-controlled everything to democracy. It required precious sacrifices from Bulgarian people and there is still a long way to go, but at least one important success has been achieved. It is now a common belief in Bulgarian society that, although the goal is still far ahead, the course of democratization is irreversible.

Bulgaria's strong commitment to a democratic way of development is one of the prerequisites for ethnic peace in the country. Bulgaria has a tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance since the very beginning of her existence when it was established on a multiethnic and multireligious basis. Then the end of the Ottoman Empire was marked by the emergence of new old states with culturally and ethnically

mixed populations. In all the countries the prevailing minority component was ethnic Turks. Nearly all the countries undertook a policy of a different degrees of forcible assimilation and/or suppression towards minority groups of all "alien" ethnicity. It was Bulgaria that did not undertake a decisive ethnic cleansing. As a result a peaceful coexistence of Bulgarians and Turks was established and continued throughout its modern history up to the unpopular attempt of the communist government in 1984 to proselytize the ethnic Turks. A good proof for the unpopularity of that action is the fact that it was unable to inspire ethnic hatred amongst the people that we can see in some other Balkan countries. Even after the collapse of the communist regime, when conditions for expressing all sorts of disagreement with official government, to include ethnic unrest, were created, the only outburst was the establishment of the Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF), a purely ethnic political party of Bulgarian Turks. Putting aside the fact that it is quite possible that such a party would not have been created had the communist government not undertaken its unfortunate and unsuccessful step in 1984, an argument in favor of the democratic spirit of Bulgarian policy and Bulgarian society is that the MRF was readily recognized and took a rather significant part in Bulgarian political life. Another example of the low level of ethnic tension in the country is that during the local elections in 1999 MRF candidates, surprisingly to them, did not win in some of the regions predominantly populated by ethnic Turks. It comes to show that people do not too much consider ethnic division as a consolidating principle, but vote according to their political, economic and moral values and expectations.

Presuming that there is no security without stability and recognizing that internal stability depends exclusively on peoples well being and on the confidence that a better future is not such an illusive hope and hollow phrase as it was during communist era, one of the main goals that must be achieved is making economic prosperity as steady and irreversible as the process of the democratization was made. Failure in this field would not only jeopardize all positive changes made so far but for sure would put the country onto the list of failing states with all the pitiful consequences.

Bulgarian foreign policy is decisively and wholly directed toward promoting peace, stability, security and economic prosperity in the region.

Establishing constructive, peaceful, trusting, and mutually beneficial relations with all neighboring countries is one of the pillars of Bulgarian foreign policy. Having painful experience during numerous conflicts in pursuit of the national ideal – incorporation of all Bulgarian populated areas into a single Bulgarian national state – Bulgaria long ago declared and stays firmly behind the declaration, that she has no territorial claims towards any of her neighbors. Accordingly Bulgaria recognizes all Balkan states' borders as inviolable. It was this firm attitude to the issue of Balkan security and stability in regard to borders, and not anything else, that made the decision to join the NATO alliance during the Kosovo crisis so difficult for the Bulgarian government to embrace.

Bulgaria has signed numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements with all her neighbors. Many of them, such as the Black Sea Economic Zone, are purely economic, but promote regional stability by their very nature of making relationships closer and interdependence higher. Others have a prominent peace-

enhancing character. Bulgaria plays an active role in military to military contacts among Balkan states. On 3 October 1997 she hosted the historic meeting between Balkan defense ministers in Sofia where an important declaration expressing the Balkan states' determination to develop peaceful relationships, confidence building measures and defense and security issues cooperation was unanimously adopted. Also, Bulgaria is one of the proponents of the initiative for establishing regional multinational peace forces in Southeastern Europe comprising one mechanized brigade. Presently Bulgaria accommodates the brigade's Headquarter. Alongside her active participation in Partnership for Peace initiative Bulgaria actively engages in the recently created Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe of 10 June 1999 and is decisively committed to all of its provisions.

Enlargement of the European Union (EU) and NATO to include the Balkans is considered critical for Balkan security by most of the Bulgarian strategic leaders and politicians. This concept influences both Bulgarian foreign and domestic policy and permeates throughout all its actions and interactions on the internal and international political arena.

This vision is based on a careful analysis of the current situation and the tendencies in its development in the foreseeable future. Therefore joining NATO and the EU is Bulgaria's main strategic objective. Although these two organizations are separate entities and joining each of them is a separate issue, as long as there is no security without stability (to which economic prosperity is critical), and as far as NATO is a synonym of security and EU's other name is Prosperity, both of them play key roles in building future peaceful and stable Balkans.

This vision, with small exceptions, is shared by all Balkan nations. In the views and attitudes of Western leaders and politicians it had a longer and somewhat meandering evolution. This was because while to the Balkan countries the idea of joining the Euro-Atlantic structures was an obvious continuation of their free choice made after the burden of Soviet imposed socialist regimes was lifted, for the Western states the issue was, and still is, far more complicated. And Russia's attitude towards Euro-Atlantic expansion and especially NATO enlargement, although frequently pointed to as a currently significant and most probably larger in the future potential obstacle, was not the only major concern. For the USA the future of these two organizations is connected to its ability to maintain, affirm and broaden its role as the only, invincible, and uncontested superpower. At the same time the Western European countries' traditional deep concern about maintaining their own well being was the agent that narrowed their approach and to a large extent made it initially difficult for them to see the inevitability of globalization.

There were times when many shared the opinion of the prominent US statesman George Kennan, who viewed NATO enlargement as "most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era..." [3] Public opinion and the politicians' fears were perpetually nourished by the rigid stand of Russia most clearly expressed in Yeltsin's assertion that enlarging NATO 'will mean a conflagration of war throughout Europe, for sure.' [4]

After the accession of three former members of the Warsaw pact (Poland Hungary and the Czech Republic), but not only because of that, it became clear that no matter what further NATO policy would be

in the near future, it could not be expected to be perceived as a peaceful one by Russia, at least not until a general internal change takes place. So the policy makers faced the dilemma of choosing between inaction aimed to improve the relationships with Russia, thus sacrificing the hope for future peace and stability, and to temporarily worsen the same relationships in the name of the long run success of promoting peace and democracy, a process to include in the future Russia as well.

The evolution of the European point of view was slower but followed the same way of thinking. Also Europe had learned the bitter lesson that the policy of exclusion – as applied to Germany after World War I which led to a disaster – could be dangerous, while the inclusion of the same country in a European collective defense system after World War II yielded peace and prosperity.[5]

This evolution of view, although far from propelling decisive actions, had its impact on shaping policy towards NATO enlargement. The nine current candidates for NATO membership are now working on a program that is designed in such a way that its final step would be admission into the alliance. During his official visit to Bulgaria in 1999 US president Clinton named it not only as a close ally to NATO but also as a future member of the alliance.

As for EU enlargement there was a better understanding that it will be successful and beneficial, yet there was unwillingness to speed up the process. This was due to fear that it may affect the welfare of West European countries and to the reluctance of their governments to take such risks.

It was the US that first realized the benefits it could derive from the globalization of the world economy. Also, the US overcame one of its major concerns about Europe becoming a peer competitor, realizing that the process of further unifying Europe does not eliminate the necessity of maintaining America's leading position. The European states have long ago found it nice "to have an extracontinental player in the game that is bigger than each and all but is also more of an elephant than a Tyrannosaurus."[6]

So the US put additional pressure on European policy makers, exercising its considerable influence, in convincing them that EU enlargement would be beneficial for Europe too and urging them to reassess their course and stance.

All this resulted in the forming of a positive attitude in EU countries toward EU enlargement, and they initiated talks with a number of countries in the region aimed at their final admission. Turkey was also given the status of a recognized candidate for EU membership.

Now the image of an extended NATO and a larger EU is not as startling as it used to be in the mid 1990's.

In conclusion, instead of summarizing what has been written above, it is worth saying that there is a reason for a certain dose of optimism about the future of the Balkans. A general agreement about the necessity of salving Balkan problem positively exists within the international community.

There is a clear vision of the desired end-state – full integration of the Balkans into European and Euro-Atlantic economic and security structures. There is an understanding that this goal must be achieved, for the lessons of history show that mistakes and failure to seize opportunities are punished,

and the higher the capabilities the greater the ferocity of the punishment. That is why steps to that end are taken accordingly:

- The "knowing the enemy" factor is clear – the security threats that may hinder and even endanger the process of integration of the Balkans into European and Euro-Atlantic structures on one side and all internal and external forces, that can obstruct the same process.
- There is a great deal of "knowing yourself" – the capabilities of the Balkan states and international community to wrestle the hindrances and prevail over the obstructive forces;
- Ways that are to be followed in order to achieve the final goal are being planned, drawn and readjusted.
- There is a will to determine the means – however slow the process of allocation of the necessary resources may be, it is in progress.

All this come to not only inspire a moderate level of optimism amongst European states but also, and which is more needed, to give Balkan nations a thrust ahead by making it possible for them to see the light at the end of the tunnel of still raging violent conflicts.

Word count: 5366.

ENDNOTES

[1] R. Craig Nation, "US Policy and the Kosovo Crisis," <u>The International Spectator</u> volume XXXIII, no. 4 (October – December 1998): 23.

[2] William J. Clinton, <u>A National Security Strategy for a New Century</u>. (Washington, D.C.: The White House, October 1998): 16.

[3] George F. Kennan, "A Fateful Blunder," <u>New York Times</u>, (5 Feb. 1997): A23.

[4] Steven Erlanger, "Yeltsin Says an Expanded NATO Would Mean War," <u>International Herald Tribune</u> (9/10 Sept. 1995): 1, 8.

[5] Mary N. Hampton, "NATO at the Creation: U.S. Foreign Policy, West Germany, and the Wilsonian Impulse," <u>Security Studies</u> 4 (Spring 1995): 610-56.

[6] Josef Joffe, "How America Does It," <u>Foreign Affairs</u> 76, no.5 (September/October 1997): 22.

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